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UNHCR'S INSPECTION ACTIVITIES

I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its forty-fifth session the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme endorsed the High Commissioner's proposal (EC/SC.2/70 of 16 September 1994) to establish an Inspection and Evaluation Service (IES). Responsibility for evaluation was subsequently transferred to a new Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit in the Department of Operations in February 1999 following an internal review. At that time, IES was renamed the Inspector General's Office (IGO). This report covers developments in inspection and investigation over the 12 months ending 31 July 2000. A separate report (A/AC.96/935) covers evaluation, including the functions of the newly-established Evaluation Committee (which the Inspector General chairs). In addition, an information note (EC/50/SC/INF/6) describes the relationship between inspection, evaluation and related activities as part of UNHCR's performance review framework.
2. The IGO is located within the Executive Office and the Inspector General reports directly to the High Commissioner. The Inspector General is also the central focal point for investigation in UNHCR. The IGO comprises seven staff: the Inspector General, four inspection officers, an investigations coordinator and two support staff. The IGO acts as Secretariat for the Oversight Committee, which is chaired by the Deputy High Commissioner, and reviews oversight plans and audit reports. The Oversight Committee has met four times during the reporting period.
3. A short leaflet describing the work of the IGO was produced in early 2000 and distributed to all staff and to members of the Executive Committee.

II. INSPECTION

4. Inspections are an internal oversight and management tool that provide the High Commissioner and her senior managers with a broad review of the functioning of her field representation at all levels. At the same time, an inspection provides field representatives and their staff with an independent

and objective review of their performance and, where necessary, with a second opinion on difficult issues. Inspection reports are confidential, internal documents addressed to the High Commissioner. Reports include recommendations for improvements and action to overcome constraints. They often draw on the best practices or solutions observed in other inspections. Reports are finalized after taking into account the views of those directly concerned, with whom the report is shared in draft for comments and who are required to report on action taken in response to the final report. The inspection function in UNHCR is thus broadly analogous to that of the inspectorates of some diplomatic services.

5. Inspections during this reporting period covered a further 15 countries, bringing to 89 the total inspected since 1995. UNHCR's operations in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Canada and the United States were inspected in the last quarter of 1999. Those in Senegal, Gambia, Guinea Bissau and Germany were inspected in early 2000, followed by Afghanistan and Pakistan. Thereafter, inspections covered Belgium and Luxembourg, East Timor, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Singapore. Operations in Georgia were inspected in July 2000. The Standing Committee of the Executive Committee is kept informed of inspection activities through the updates on regional developments. The inspections were conducted by the Inspector General with one or more other staff of the IGO. A colleague from the Department of International Protection with experience of the region has also been an integral member of the inspection teams.

6. The methodology used in inspections has been further adjusted and improved during the reporting period. Questionnaires are used in preparation for an inspection and these have been revised and streamlined. They include the individual confidential questionnaire that is the basis for the interview conducted with each staff member; questionnaires for the heads of field offices and the direct counterpart at Headquarters; for the country office as a whole; and for the key government and other external interlocutors met by the Inspector General and other members of the team. The *Inspection Handbook*, which sets out the methodology, is under revision to reflect these changes. A fourth edition is due to be produced by the end of 2000, as will a further report disseminating lessons learnt from inspections that have a wider relevance.

III. INVESTIGATION

7. As the focal point for investigation, the Inspector General is responsible for the overall coordination of investigations. The new post of Investigations Coordinator in the IGO was filled in late 1999. Areas of concern include, but are not limited to, allegations of fraud; misuse of UNHCR funds or resources; waste or abuse of UNHCR facilities; abuse of authority or United Nations privileges; sexual harassment and other improper conduct including violations of United Nations and UNHCR regulations, rules or relevant administrative instructions, which, if proven, would constitute misconduct under the Staff Rules.

8. In accordance with the Administrative Instruction on Revised Disciplinary Measures and Procedures (ST/AI/371 of 2 August 1991), the head of office or responsible officer concerned should undertake a preliminary investigation of such allegations. Where this may not be appropriate, because of the complexity of the case or for other reasons, reports of allegations that may warrant an investigation are made directly to, or are referred to the Inspector General. Procedures are in place to ensure confidentiality and are described in the leaflet cited above. On receipt of such reports, the Inspector General consults as necessary in order to determine whether an investigation is warranted and, if so, ensures that it

is undertaken in an appropriate manner and monitors progress. Depending on their nature, investigations are conducted by UNHCR staff (normally the Investigations Coordinator and one other UNHCR official with relevant experience), by the UNHCR Audit Section of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), by the Investigations Section of OIOS, or using other resources. The outcome is either referral of the case to the Head of the Human Resources Service (HRS) for action in accordance with the Administrative Instruction (ST/AI/371) or a determination that the case should be closed.

9. Within UNHCR, the key counterpart of the IGO is the Legal Affairs Section of the HRS. The Investigations Coordinator also liaises closely with the Investigations Section, OIOS, and with investigation counterparts in other United Nations organizations. He attended the first United Nations Investigators' Conference hosted by OIOS in New York in September 1999 and the second hosted by the World Food Programme (WFP) in Rome in June 2000.

10. A handbook setting out the methodology for investigations is under preparation. In addition, the Joint Inspection Unit is currently preparing a report on investigation capabilities in the United Nations system.